INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Chief, Navy Dental Corps Change of Office Ceremony

Dental Colleagues,

RDML(Sel) Brafford and I have completed our turnover and I want to be the first to congratulate him as he now takes charge as the 40th Chief of our incredible Navy Dental Corps. He has an exceptional military and professional background and will undoubtedly lead our Corps to new heights of Operational Readiness and clinical excellence.

It has been my absolute honor and privilege to serve as your Corps Chief these past 3 years, as it has afforded me a unique vantage point to observe first-hand the propound impact you've all had on the projection of Medical Power in support of Naval Superiority. Whether at the tip of the spear delivering unparalleled dental capability in a forward deployed environment or in clinics around the world generating operational dental readiness for our Navy and Marine Corps team, your performance was unparalleled and extraordinary. We also set an unmatched standard of excellence in our world renowned educational and research programs, ensuring our future dental force will be the most capable ever known.

Battling though the invisible enemy of Covid-19 and a global pandemic, our Corps did not waiver in our commitment to support the joint force and deliver world class care to the most deserving beneficiaries in the world...those who wear and have worn the cloth of our Nation and the families who support them. I am incredibly proud of all you have accomplished and will forever be in awe of that spirit of selfless service you demonstrated each and every day.

Our Dental Corps is in exceptional hands with RDML(Sel) Brafford at the helm and I look forward to watching how you continue to lead the way for Navy Medicine.

With great respect and admiration,

RDML Rick Freedman

Defense Health Headquarters—Falls Church, VA



Celebrating the change of office for Chief, Navy Dental Corps at Defense Health Headquarters in Falls Church, VA. **Pictured above (L to R):** 40th Chief, Navy Dental Corps, RDML(Sel) Walter D. Brafford and 39th Chief, Navy Dental Corps, RADM(Sel) Rick Freedman.



Pictured above (L to R): 40th Chief, Navy Dental Corps, RDML(Sel) Walter D. Brafford, CAPT Kathi Buss (Dental Corps Career Planner), CDR Kate Cheng (Dental Corps Policy and Practice Officer), CAPT Steven Blaustein (Dental Corps Reserve Affairs Officer), CAPT Susan Johnson (Deputy Chief, Dental Corps), LCDR Meredith Owen (Dental Corps Administrative Fellow), and 39th Chief, Navy Dental Corps, RADM(Sel) Rick Freedman



Pictured above: (Left side, from front to back): CDR Kate Cheng (Dental Corps Policy and Practice Officer), CAPT Kathi Buss (Dental Corps Career Planner), and 39th Chief, Navy Dental Corps, and RADM(Sel) Rick Freedman. (Right side, from front to back): LCDR Meredith Owen (Dental Corps Administrative Fellow), CAPT Steven Blaustein (Dental Corps Reserve Affairs Officer), CAPT Susan Johnson (Deputy Chief, Dental Corps), and 40th Chief, Navy Dental Corps, RDML(Sel) Walter D. Brafford. (All photographs by MC1(SW/AW) John Grandin, 12 April 2023)



CAPT W. D. Brafford, DC, USN

CAPT Brafford is a native of Southwest Missouri. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Drury College and a Doctorate in Dental Surgery degree from the University of Missouri School of Dentistry. He holds Master's Degrees from The George Washington University, the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (ICAF), and a Certificate in Periodontology from the Naval Postgraduate Dental School.

CAPT Brafford's assignments have included the Naval Dental Center Parris Island, SC where he completed a one-year Advanced Education in General Dentistry program; Division Officer onboard the USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN-75); Administrative Assistant to the Chief, Navy Dental Corps at the Bureau of Medicine & Surgery; Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA, where he served as the department head, specialty advisor for periodontics and Associate Director; Director of Dental Services and Director for Clinical Support Services at Naval Hospital Beaufort, SC; Navy Medicine East in Portsmouth, VA, where he served as the Senior Dental Executive overseeing 19 commands while serving as region lead for the Secretary of Defense Military Health Systems review; Naval Health Clinic New England where he served as Executive Officer; Navy Personnel Command (PERS-4415) in Millington, TN as the Head Dental Corps Assignment Officer; Naval Health Clinic Annapolis/Navy Medicine Readiness & Training Command Annapolis where he served as the Commanding Officer; and the Bureau of Medicine & Surgery, where he has served as the Assistant Deputy Chief for Medical Operations (N3), Deputy Chief of Operations, Plans & Readiness (N2/3/5), and Director, Commanders Action Group (CAG).

CAPT Brafford is qualified to wear the following military decorations and awards: Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (5), Navy Commendation Medal (2), Navy Achievement Medal (2), Surface Warfare Medical Department Officer (SWMDO) and various unit awards.

Navy Dental Corps,

It is truly an honor and privilege to serve you as the 40th Chief of the Navy Dental Corps. I am humbled by this opportunity and immensely aware of the duties and responsibilities commensurate with the title.

Rear Admiral Freedman, thank you for your leadership and guidance of our Corps. You set the Dental Corps up for success with your leadership these past 3 years, which saw unprecedented challenges throughout the Navy as a whole. As you transition from Corps Chief to Deputy Surgeon General, please know that you have the sincere appreciation and gratitude of the entire dental community.

As I begin my tenure as the 40th Corps Chief, Navy Medicine and Navy Dentistry are entering a time of tremendous and unprecedented transformation. We must continue to adapt and innovate as a Corps. We cannot be constrained by 'the box.' I'm very interested to hear from you what is working, what is not working, and what needs to change. I intend to focus on our greatest strength - our people, and how we can nurture, grow, and retain our most valuable assets. My vow to you is to listen and represent our priorities and our Corps to the fullest.

I look forward to earning your trust, building relationships, and working with each of you to make the Navy Dental Corps the best it can be.

With my deepest respect -

W. D. Brafford CAPT, DC, USN Chief, Navy Dental Corps (WD-40)